

Deuteronomy 22:9-12

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Moses prohibited the mixture of seed, plow animals, and clothes.

A new section seems to begin in v. 9. This section contains an exposition of the seventh commandment—"You shall not commit adultery" ([Exodus 20:14](#); [Deuteronomy 5:18](#)). It extends to [Deuteronomy 23:18](#). The concept of adultery is expanded to include various forms of improper mixing.

In these verses, Moses prescribed regulations concerning how the Israelites were to sow, plow with animals, and wear garments. The first law commanded Israel to *not sow their vineyard with two kinds of seed* (v. 9). A *vineyard* was a plot of land used for growing grapes, and seeds from other types of crops were not to be sown in the midst of the grapevines.

Prohibiting the sowing of seeds in a vineyard other than grapevines was probably more symbolic than practical. A mixture of seeds other than grapes would represent a pollution of the vineyard. This is probably in view of the fact that Israel is called a vineyard ([Psalm 80:8 – 15](#)). Planting non-grape plants would represent the allowance of other influences to pollute the pure worship of the LORD.

So, such a mixture would likely symbolize the combination of spiritual elements (such as allowing the worship of Canaanite deities) that would be detestable to the Suzerain (Ruler) God. Moses continued by stating that *all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled*. The word *defiled* (Heb. "tiqdash") is related to the verb "to be holy." The idea here seems to be that something that is defiled, like something that is holy, cannot and should not be used in everyday life.

In verse 10, Moses taught the same lesson regarding mixture of items but this time it pertains to plow animals. The Israelites were commanded not to *plow with an ox and a donkey together* (v. 10). An *ox* is a large domesticated beast of burden used essentially in Israel for farm work. A *donkey* is a beast of burden, used to carry both goods and people ([Genesis 22:3-5](#); [Exodus 4:20](#); [23:12](#); [1 Samuel 25:20](#)). The Israelites were prohibited to use these two beasts together not only because they did not have equal strength but also because the *ox* was a clean animal while the *donkey* was unclean

([Deuteronomy 14](#)). In the New Testament, Paul used this imagery to illustrate that a believer should not be *bound together* (lit. unequally yoked) with an unbeliever ([2 Corinthians 6:14](#)).

In the third illustration of mixtures not allowed, Moses stated that the people were to *not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together* (v. 11). *Wool* refers to the textile fiber one can obtain from the hair of sheep. It is used specially to make warm clothes ([Proverbs 31:13](#)). *Linen* is the garment obtained from flax, a grass-like plant which gives soft fibers for making cooler clothes ([Proverbs 31:13](#)).

The spiritual significance might be that Canaanite priests dressed in linen. So, if an Israelite was clothed with garments mixed with wool and linen, this could represent a mixture of the worship of the LORD with the worship of Canaanite deities. As a result, the Israelites were not to wear garments made with *wool* and *linen* woven together because it symbolized a corrupted worship of the LORD. The priestly garments, by contrast, were made of pure linen ([Leviticus 6:10, 16:4](#)).

Moses closed this section with a positive command. He asked the Israelites to *make for themselves tassels on the four corners of their garment with which they would cover themselves* (v. 12). The term *tassel* (Heb. “gedilīm”) refers to an ornament made of cords bound at one end.

Moses did not give the reason for asking the Israelites to do this here, but it might be that this was a reminder to the generation entering the Promised Land of what the LORD told the previous generation in [Numbers 15:37 – 41](#). There, He said that wearing the tassels was meant to be a reminder of “all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes” ([Numbers 15:39](#)) and that they may “remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God” ([Numbers 15:40](#)).

One could ask what mixing seeds, mixing animals used for plowing, and mixing clothes have to do with the seventh commandment. It has been suggested that these issues were used as illustrations of purity in the community. Adultery, called the “Great Sin” in parts of the ancient Near East, was the epitome of impurity. It involves a mixture of persons from different families. It also was a violation of the marriage covenant, and it served as an illustration of the impurity of spiritual adultery—mixing the faith and worship of the LORD with pagan faith and worship practices.

Biblical Text:

⁹ You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled.

¹⁰ You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

¹¹ You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.

¹² You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself.